

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

LESSON VI, FOURTH QUARTER, INTERNATIONAL SERIES, NOV. 9.

Text of the Lesson, Josh. xiv, 14-25. Memory Verses, 14, 15—Golden Text, Josh. xxiv, 15—Commentary Prepared by the Rev. D. M. Stearns.

[Copyright, 1902, by American Press Association.] 14, 15. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Joshua, having lived a hundred and ten years and being conscious that the time had come for him to go the way of all the earth, gathered the tribes of Israel and reminded them that not one thing had failed of all the good things which the Lord had spoken concerning them (chapter xxiv, 29; xxiii, 14). He called for the elders, the heads of tribes, the judges and officers to present themselves before God at Shechem, and there he rehearsed unto them the story of God's dealings with them and entreated them to fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and truth, telling them that whatever they might decide he was determined that he and his house would serve the Lord. It was in order that they and all that they had might serve Him that He had brought them forth from the land of Egypt, the house of bondage (Ex. iii, 12; x, 26). If we have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, it is in order that we may with humility and gladness serve the living and true God while we wait for His Son from heaven (I Thess. i, 9, 10; Acts xx, 19; Ps. c, 2). Our Lord taught His disciples that as He was among them as one that serveth the way of service is the way of true greatness (Luke xxiii, 24-27), and that by love we are to serve one another (Gal. v, 13).

16-18. God forbid that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods. We also will serve the Lord, for He is our God. They certainly had every reason to serve Him only and truly, for, as they said, He had brought their fathers out of the bondage of Egypt and preserved them and brought them to that land, and Joshua had just reminded them that the Lord had given them a land for which they did not labor, cities which they had not built and vineyards and olive yards which they had not planted (verse 13). Yet they had already had occasion to say many times in their brief history, "O Lord our God, other lords beside Thee have had dominion over us" (Isa. xlvii, 13). That which Daniel had to say to Belshazzar, "The God in whose hand thy breath is and whose are all thy ways hast thou not glorified" (Dan. v, 23), might be truthfully said to many other gentiles as well as Jews, and how many seem to forget that it is God alone who giveth us life and breath and all things and in whom we live and move and have our being (Acts xvii, 25, 28). This should be enough to lead any one to wish to serve such a benefactor; but we cannot serve Him till we are redeemed, for, although He has created us, sin has separated us from Him, and the carnal mind, being at enmity with God, cannot please God (Rom. viii, 7, 8). As freely as God by His own power redeemed Israel from Egypt that they might serve Him, so freely He redeems every one who will let Him that all such may serve Him and walk in newness of life for their own highest happiness as well as for His glory (Rom. iii, 24; vi, 4, 6, 11, 13, 16).

19-21. And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the Lord. Joshua in reply to their assurance that they would serve the Lord reminds them that they must be sincere, for the Lord is both holy and jealous. Holy is the only word that is used of God three times in one verse, and that only in two places (Isa. xl, 3; Rev. i, 8). He, being holy, requires a holy people (Lev. xix, 2; I Pet. i, 15, 16), a people willing to be wholly His, separated unto Himself alone, that He may do His utmost for them and be magnified in them. God is called jealous in just seven different places (Ex. xx, 5; xxxiv, 14; Deut. iv, 24; v, 9; vi, 15; Josh. xxiv, 19; Nah. i, 2), though His jealousy is spoken of in other passages. The thought implied is simply that which is His for the highest good of the possession. He delights to give and to bless, but He is hindered by our half-heartedness and lack of confidence in Him.

22-24. The Lord our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey. Hearing their firm protestation of a great determination to serve the Lord, Joshua further tells them that in taking this stand they must understand that they are taking a stand against themselves, and they must turn with their whole heart to God by putting away all strange gods from among them. We all need this teaching so much, for we are inclined to take sides with ourselves against God. We are apt to say as Simon Peter said to our Lord when He first spoke of His sufferings and of His death on the cross, "Be it far from thee (pity thyself). But our Lord immediately taught Simon and the other disciples that all who would follow Him must deny self and bear the cross (Matt. xvi, 22, 24).

25. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day. This verse and also verse 1 says that it was done at Shechem, and as Shechem was a city of refuge (xx, 7) it signifies "shoulder" it is all suggestive of this—that we must find in the Lord our constant refuge from self and sin and in our conscious weakness dwell between His shoulders and let the government of all our affairs and of ourselves also be upon His shoulder (Ps. xlii, 7, 11; Deut. xxxiii, 12; Isa. ix, 6, 7). The stone that witnessed and heard it all (verse 27) is also suggestive of the stone of Isa. xxviii, 16; Ps. cxviii, 22.

A Liberal Offer.

The undersigned will give a free sample of Chamberlain's Stomach and Liver Tablets to any one wanting a reliable remedy for disorders of the stomach, biliousness or constipation. This is a new remedy and a good one. Sold by S. E. Welch, Jr.



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The night was passed with snatches of sleep by all the party. In the morning, after the pork and corn bread meal of the country, the travelers again got into the carriages. While they were standing before the gate prior to departure Mark saw Sonri out by the well-house. He went there to bid her goodbye.

"Souri," he said, "I wish there was some way in which I could show you the gratitude I feel toward you. When I think of my fate, had you not appeared in the nick of time to save me by your wit and daring and sacrifice, I feel that I would like to make some corresponding sacrifice for you."

"Laws, I didn't do nothing. Besides"—she leaned over the well and looked down into its depths—"you uns and me is too differ. You uns is a gentleman, and I air poor white trash."

There was an inexpressible melancholy in her tone.

"Souri," Mark went on, "I have made an arrangement with your father to make a lady of you. I can't make such a sacrifice for you as you have made for me; that is impossible; but I can do this, if you will act with me and consent to the plan. I shall be off in a moment, and before I go I want you to promise me that you will consent. I am still in danger, and you must grant me this as perhaps a last favor."

The girl burst into tears.

"Promise."

"I don't keer what I do."

"Do you promise?"

"Yas, I promise."

With a pressure of the hand he turned away, and stalking to the gate, got into the carriage beside Laura. Daniel and Mrs. Fain had started. Mark followed, and had gone but a short distance when he heard Jakey calling to him. He pulled in the pony and waited for the boy to come up. Jakey was holding something out to him, which, as he drew nearer, Mark recognized as the red silk handkerchief.

"Souri sent it ter y'."

"Tell her that I'll never part with it."

"N I got the squirrel gun," said the boy.

"All right, Jakey. Keep it to remember me by."

Mark grasped the boy's hand and then drove on. Laura Fain leaned back on the cushions in silence.

CHAPTER XIX.

THOMAS GREEN AND WIFE.



"Do you take me to be your husband?" Mark demanded driving to Anderson, some twelve miles from the Slacks' house, whence he knew there was a road leading up in the mountains through a place called Altamont, some twenty miles farther, to McMinnville. He was informed by people he met on the road that Altamont had been recently occupied in force by the Union troops. With luck they might reach the Union lines, which would doubtless extend several miles from Altamont, that afternoon.

"Within six hours," said Mark, "I shall either be safe among Union soldiers or on my way back to Chattanooga."

Laura shuddered, but said nothing. Mark found a very different condition of affairs at Anderson from what he had found along the road. The Confederates had some cavalry force there and more at Dunlap, five miles north. On the road he heard that General Bragg was at Dunlap, but with no troops save cavalry.

"I see it all," said the spy to himself. "The wily fox is confronting our forces with a handful of cavalry, while the two divisions of Cheatham and Withers are marching north behind him, and the main force has gone to Knoxville by rail on a line still farther east. No wonder our generals are puzzled and watching a line from Battle creek to Cumberland gap. If the Lord will only let me get through to carry this information, I'll never ask to live to go on another such expedition."

The party were stopped near Anderson by a picket. Mrs. Fain produced her pass and stated that the two behind were in her company. The officer took no especial care in reading it, and when Mark and Laura came up they got safely through without question.

Mark was now anxious about the picket which must be passed in a few minutes on the road leading west from Anderson. Mrs. Fain was still ahead, and he hoped that all would go as well as at the picket just passed. Not a word was spoken between him and

Laura; both dreaded getting out of Anderson, but once past the next picket they would breathe easier.

When they reached it Mrs. Fain had been passed through and gone on. The officer in command, however, had read the pass carefully. He had not noticed any mention of Mark in it.

"Where's your pass?" he asked.

"Didn't the lady ahead show it to you?" asked Mark.

"Her pass didn't include you."

"Didn't it?" Mark feigned surprise.

"No."

"Oh, I forgot; mine and my wife's is separate," and he drew out the pass of "Thomas Green and wife."

Meanwhile Laura had turned white as a cloth. The officer read the pass, and would doubtless have let them go had he not noticed Laura's agitation.

"You'll have to go back to headquarters and get Major Taliaferro's order on that," he commanded at Anderson.

Mark remonstrated. He argued that he would become separated from Mrs. Fain; he urged his wife's desire to reach her sick father. All in vain. He was told that the headquarters were only half a mile down the road and he would lose but little time. He made a virtue of necessity and drove back with apparent good nature.

When he reached the house that was pointed out to him as headquarters, he left Laura in the phaeton and went inside. The commanding officer had gone to Dunlap, five miles away, to pay his respects to General Bragg, and would not be back for an hour or two.

Mark resolved to report his absence to the officer of the picket post, in the hope that he would not be compelled to wait. He drove to the picket and used his tongue persuasively, but to no purpose. The more anxious he seemed the more resolved grew the captain.

There seemed to be nothing to do but return and await the arrival of the commanding officer. Mark reluctantly turned the horse's head and drove back to headquarters. Laura's heart sank within her.

It was sunset when Major Taliaferro, a pleasant-looking man of twenty-seven or twenty-eight, rode up to the door, and turning his horse over to an orderly entered the office.

"Major Taliaferro?" asked Mark.

"At your service, sir."

"Major, I have been detained by the officer at the picket, who wants your name on my pass. My wife's mother has gone on, and her daughter is very anxious to join her. It is extremely unfortunate for us to get so far separated from Mrs. Fain."

"Fain, of the Fains of Chattanooga?"

"The same."

"I have heard of the family, but have never had the pleasure of meeting any member of it. One of my friends is engaged to Miss Fain. I have just parted from him at Dunlap."

Mark and Laura cast a quick glance at each other—a glance of terror on the part of Laura.

"We are fortunate in falling into your hands," said Mark, and I beg you will not delay us a moment." And Mark handed him the pass.

"Certainly not." And the major took up a pen to write his endorsement. First he read the pass carefully. He was thinking of what his friend Fitz Hugh had told him of the Fains. He was under the impression that there was but one daughter.

"Mr. Green," he said, looking up from the pass, "hadn't you better stay here over night? The road is mountainous and infested by guerrillas. It is positively dangerous to travel."

"By no means. What would Mrs. Fain think of our not joining her on the road?"

"It is dangerous for her as well as you. I'll send a messenger after her and advise her stopping at some farmhouse. I'll do better than that, I'll send a corporal and half a dozen men to insure her safety till morning."

There was something in the man's tone, polite as it was, that indicated to Mark that he was held for further information.

"As you please, major."

"And I shall insist upon your accepting my hospitality. One connected in any way with my friend Fitz Hugh must not want for any comfort I can supply."

The house occupied by Major Taliaferro belonged to a family who had gladly given up a portion of it for the safety insured by the presence of a commanding officer. The major was given a room down stairs for an office, and a bedroom up stairs. When it was decided that Mark and Laura should remain he gave Mrs. Green, as he called her, the use of the latter for the purpose of arranging her toilet before supper.

When Laura was up stairs Mark was looking out of the window of the major's office. He saw the men ride off to overtake Mrs. Fain. To his consternation another cavalryman, with a letter in his belt, mounted his horse and dashed down the road.

Laura came down at that moment, and Mark said to her anxiously,

"I am detained on suspicion. I shall be taken back to Chattanooga," and he pointed to the courier.

The color left Laura's cheeks. They had got so near to safety, and now, after so many dangers, the end was at hand. She could scarcely sustain herself as she tottered into the room occupied as the office.

This is the letter the courier bore northward. It was addressed on the envelope to Captain Cameron Fitz Hugh, near Dunlap:

ANDERSON, Aug. 29, 1862.

MY DEAR CAMERON—A man purporting to be Thomas Green, with his wife, formerly a Miss Fain, of Chattanooga, is here, desiring a pass to the Union lines. There is something suspicious about the man. The couple are separated from the wife's mother, and the father lies very ill at Nashville. I dislike to detain them, and I do not regard it safe to pass them. Can you help me out of the difficulty? Yours very truly,

WALLACE TALIAFERRO.

Major Taliaferro soon joined Mark and Laura in his office, and offering his arm to Laura led the way to the supper room. His treatment of both was most deferential, but it failed to deceive either that they were prisoners.

There was a strength of nerve in Mark that would not break while there was hope. He chatted with the host or jailer, whichever he might be called, with ease, and at times with gaiety. Not so Laura. The situation was too frightful for her to endure without some manifestation of anxiety. She ate nothing. She did not hear what was said to her, and her eyes plainly showed the troubled spirit within. Mark made no reference to her condition till after supper. Then, when all three went out on to the veranda, he said to her:

"Come, let us take a stroll. You have been traveling all day, and this delay troubles you. A walk in the air will revive you."

Mark assumed with such apparent carelessness that he was free to walk about where he liked that Taliaferro had not the will to stop him. Besides he had no heart to interfere with the pleasure of a woman whom he was pretending to treat as a guest. The couple walked leisurely down the road, Mark looking at the sunset tints with well-assumed indifference, occasionally pointing to some object by the way or in the distance, calling Laura's attention to it at the same time. He knew the major's gaze was fixed upon him, and he was doing all this for a purpose.

The road led straight from the house a short distance and then entered a wood. As soon as they were concealed behind the trees Mark stopped suddenly and turned to Laura:

"My God, this is terrible!"

"You are lost!" said Laura faintly. She could scarcely speak the words.

"If yes, I. But you—what have I led you into? Why was it not over on that morning when it was intended? Then you would not be implicated; now your good name is—"

"No one will trouble me," she gasped.

"But you—they will drag you—"

"You have protected me—a spy. Not only that—that is nothing in comparison with having passed as my wife. There is a blight."

"I can bear it."

"There is but one way out of this disgrace. You must be married before we return to that house. And to whom?"

his voice changed from a rapid, excited tone to deepest gloom—"to one who must die—die on the scaffold. At any rate you will be free. You will be a widow."

Laura stood, the very impersonation of despair.

"All I can do to atone for this," Mark went on rapidly, "and it is nothing—is to make you my wife, since I have passed you as such. Laura, will you marry me?"

She looked at him earnestly. Her eyes were big with deep emotion. There was a look in them that he could not understand.

"No!"

"Then I can do nothing for you."

"I will marry only the man who loves me, and whom I love."

"Oh, Laura," he said, "if your heart were only mine, then it would be different. I love you so well, I worship you with such fervor that I would go back to that dreadful jail without a word could I place you where you were before you met me. But you—"

Laura burst into a torrent of tears. This man, who had so suddenly appeared in her life; who had won her sympathy; who had compelled her admiration; who had absorbed her whole being into his daring, chivalrous, reckless nature—this man loved her, and he was doomed.

With a cry she threw her arms around his neck.

"Laura, sweetheart," said Mark, caressing her, "we have but little time. We know not whom we shall have to face. My true character must soon be known. Will you give yourself to one who will doubtless tomorrow be claimed by—"

Pale as ashes she put her hand over his mouth that he might not speak the word "death."

"Will you? Speak!"

"Yes, now, quick; what can we do?"

"Marry ourselves."

"How?"

He grasped her hand. There was a ring upon it—a plain gold band. He took it off, and putting it on her finger again said:

"I, Mark—"

"Is it really Mark?"

"Yes, I am Mark Maynard. I, Mark, take you, Laura, to be my wife. Do you take me to be your husband?"

"I do."

"Then we are man and wife in the sight of God!"

"And for man we care not."

"Man and wife under the law. We are really married."

Scarcely was this hurried ceremony over when a cavalryman came riding leisurely from the direction of headquarters. He had been sent by Major Taliaferro—who, as soon as Mark was out of sight, became anxious with regard to him—with instructions to keep him in sight without appearing to do so.

There was nothing left for them to do but return to the house. As they walked Mark whispered:

"I feel again all the confidence I have ever felt. I must live to make you happy. Be ready for anything that may happen, my darling, my wife. I shall doubtless play some bold game; I don't know what, but it will be bold. If I leave you suddenly, meet me (should I succeed in my attempt) within the Union lines. If not, we will meet—in heaven."

These few words were all that Mark had time to say to his newly married wife. For scarcely had they turned to go back when they met the major. He was uneasy lest Mark should depart without leave. He accompanied them back to the house.

CHAPTER XX.

FLIGHT.

It was nine o'clock in the evening. Major Taliaferro and his guests were sitting in his office room chatting. A clatter of horses' hoofs was heard at the front of the house and some one dismounted. In another moment there was a tramp of cavalry boots in the hall; all turned to the open door and there stood Captain Cameron Fitz Hugh.

For a moment he regarded Mark and

Laura sternly; then advancing a few steps he bowed low to Laura.

"Captain," said the major rising, "I suppose it is useless to deny to this lady and gentleman that I deemed it my duty to make sure of their identity before allowing them to pass. The family to which they claim to belong is known to you; therefore I sent to you for information. I see you have answered my inquiry in person. If you vouch for them I shall be happy to pass them in the morning, and shall apologize for their detention at the same time—my excuse being the cause we serve."

All eyes were fixed on Fitz Hugh, Mark's and Laura's with ill-concealed anxiety.

"This was Miss Fain," said Fitz Hugh. "She would not be traveling as any man's wife unless she were married to him. If you detain them, you must do so on your own responsibility."

Both Mark and Laura drew a sigh of relief.

"I have no desire to detain them," said Taliaferro, "after what you have said, but it is altogether too late for them to proceed tonight. The only amends I can make for discommoding them is to make them comfortable. Mrs. Green, your room is ready for you."

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